

Final Report, One Catalog Committee,
sub-committee of the LORI Resource Sharing Working Group

April 1, 2014

At present, unlike Massachusetts, Maine and Connecticut, Rhode Island do not have a statewide catalog of all library holdings. Public libraries share their resources through the Ocean State Libraries online catalog. 10 academic libraries and 11 special libraries are included in another online catalog hosted by the HELIN consortium, and Brown University has its own online catalog. These three catalogs are all purchased from the same vendor, Innovative Interfaces Incorporated. The Brown and HELIN catalogs are connected through another Innovative Interfaces product called INNReach. In addition, 160 school libraries (of a total of 500) share a Follett Destiny online catalog hosted by RILINK. Many other libraries in the state not included in any of these online catalogs have their own automated library catalogs from some of these same vendors as well as several others, but interoperability among these many systems has not been accomplished.

In February 2013, the Resource Sharing Working Group of LORI began the investigation of the feasibility of establishing a single catalog of Rhode Island library holdings.

a. Background

Passed in 1989, Chapter 6 of Title 29 of the Rhode Island General Laws deals with State Aid to Libraries and includes the following provision:

§ 29-6-9 Rhode Island library network.

(a) In order to provide each individual in Rhode Island with equal opportunity of access to resources that will satisfy their and society's information needs and interests, office of library and information services is hereby authorized to establish a Rhode Island Library network, hereafter referred to as the library of Rhode Island network (LORI), to be administered by the office of library and information services for the purpose of maintaining, promoting, and developing a program of statewide resource sharing and interlibrary cooperation...

(b) By fiscal year 2000, the state shall provide from state and federal revenue sources one hundred percent (100%) of the funding for the following statewide library services:

(1) Reference resource center located in a public library to be chosen biennially by the Office of Library Information Services from responses to a request for proposals issued by the office of library and informational services;

(2) Interlibrary delivery system;

(3) Interlibrary telecommunications system;

(4) Electronic interlibrary loan system; and

(5) Statewide catalog of all library holdings.

In 2005 the Rhode Island LibFutures Steering Committee, a statewide library task force, was convened to recommend a “collective vision for libraries and museum services in Rhode Island.” Three work groups were formed, producing white papers on the following three key service goals: One Catalog, Statewide Databases, and Lifelong Learning. The One Catalog Working Group recommended in November, 2005 that \$7.5 million be appropriated to create a single library online catalog of all Rhode Island library holdings.

In 2006 the Karla Harry Commission was authorized by the state legislature to identify strengths and weaknesses of library service in Rhode Island; however, the commission was never able to identify funding for the creation of a statewide library holdings catalog and the effort lost momentum.

It is not possible at present for a library user to conduct a single search to view the holdings of all Rhode Island libraries, whether to request a copy or just to see what is held locally. To alleviate this problem, in 2009 OLIS purchased an annual subscription to Relais, an electronic interlibrary loan system. However, the provision allowing a library user to initiate an interlibrary loan online was never implemented. Instead, the user must go through a local library to initiate a request to another LORI library owning the item. This

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process requires considerable time for library staff to facilitate requests and arrange delivery of requested items from one library to another.

In February 2013, the LORI Resource Sharing Working Group began investigating alternative options to Relais. Attendees at open forums hosted by the group expressed strong support for the identification and purchase of a product that would connect existing library catalogs with the goal of providing a convenient, one-stop solution for the discovery of resources for request and delivery—the “one catalog” initiative.

b. One Catalog Committee

Following a meeting in November, 2013 with Tom Viall, chair of the Library Board of Rhode Island, the One Catalog Committee was formed, charged to investigate vendor products that would assist with the establishment of a One Catalog for Rhode Island libraries. The group’s extensive work during the winter of 2013-14 included creating a survey for library directors to express their views on the topic of One Catalog, developing an RFI for vendors, arranging vendor demonstrations, and assessing the vendors’ products. Three library vendors responded to the committee’s RFI and were invited to library presentations open to the library community: Relais International, Innovative Interfaces, and Auto-Graphics.

After much analysis, assessment, and discussion, the One Catalog Committee reached a recommendation at a meeting held in March, 2014. This recommendation is seen as a first step toward the implementation of a true Rhode Island state library portal which will eventually incorporate the databases and services of AskRI with the resources of a statewide catalog.

c. Recommendation

- Utilize the INNReach product of Innovative Interfaces to connect the existing catalogs of Ocean State Libraries, HELIN, and Brown University to demonstrate the functionality of patron-initiated requests among these systems for a period ending no later than 2 years from the date of implementation.
- Since the three largest library catalogs in Rhode Island at this time are using Innovative Interfaces, the implementation of an INNReach connection is the least expensive vendor solution at this time, and requires minimal configuration work.
- This implementation would provide a proof of concept of the benefit of a single interface for user-initiated borrowing of materials among the connected libraries.
- Data collected during this trial period could then be used to justify the future expansion of the catalog to include additional, and if successful, eventually all libraries in Rhode Island.
- The cost to implement this solution would be approximately \$115,000.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Survey

- Appendix A1 – Survey Questions
- Appendix A2 – E-mail to Library Directors
- Appendix A3 – Survey Report

Appendix B – The Request for Information sent to the three vendors

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Appendix A

Survey

- **Appendix A1 Survey Questions**

Question 1 [answer required]

What is your affiliation?

- Academic Library
- Public Library
- School Library
- Special Library [text box provided for specification]

Question 2 [answer required]

What is the size of your circulating collection?

- 10,000
- Between 10,000 and 100,000
- Between 100,000 and 500,000
- Between 500,000 and 1,000,000
- More than a 1,000,000

Question 3 [answer required]

What is the primary way your patrons search for materials in your collection?

- Catalog of local collection
- Catalog of network/consortium (ex., HELIN & Ocean State Libraries)
- Federated Search
- Other [please specify]

Question 4 [answer required]

Would you be willing to allow non-local patrons to request materials from your library through patron initiated borrowing, i.e. a statewide catalog?

- Yes
- No
- Yes - depending on [text box provided]

Question 5 [answer required]

Would you be willing to take part in the state wide linked catalog initiative?

- Yes
- No
- Yes - depending on [text box provided]

Question 6 [optional]

Do you have questions and/or concerns regarding the implementation of a state wide catalog in Rhode Island? Please - take the time to offer us your valuable comments on this subject. Thank you. [text box provided]

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- **Appendix A2 - E-mail to Library Directors**

The e-mail sent by Bart Hollingsworth on behalf of the Committee on January 27, 2014.

Dear Library Director :

LORI's (Library of Rhode Island) Resource Sharing Working Group is seeking your guidance as it investigates the feasibility and desirability of creating a bridge between the two main library catalogs in Rhode Island: HELIN and Ocean State Libraries.

This linking of all catalogs was first attempted in 2005 under the leadership of OLIS's Rhode Island's LibFutures Committee's One Catalog Working Group. That working group, in 2005, was made up of representatives from academic, public, school, and special libraries.

A set of recommendations was developed by the group but, unfortunately, economics stalled the initiative. In 2104, we are revisiting the project with a more defined and attainable goal in mind.

We need your guidance, your endorsement for this endeavor. To acquire this, we are asking you to complete the short survey that can be reached by the link below. The survey consists primarily of multiple choice questions; however, there is an open box in which we encourage you to offer further thoughts. The last question is open ended and may be as short or as long as you wish.

However, if you do chose to add your thoughts, please take these points under consideration before answering:

What exactly should both library users, and library institutions be able to do today, that they can't do because we don't have a unified catalog?

What are the nontechnical non-financial barriers that would need to be overcome in order to achieve this?

How can technology achieve these goals and at what cost?

The One Catalog Committee is sponsoring vendor demonstrations in February.

At the end of March a report will be made available, providing details including costs of the initiative and the results of the survey. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/92LYXLT>

Please complete the survey by Monday, February 3.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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- **Appendix A3 - Survey Report**

Submitted to the committee, March 07, 2014

Author, Bart Hollingsworth

A survey was sent out by email on January 27, 2014 to all the 177 library directors in Rhode Island (representing 181 libraries), of these 96 directors responded.

Generally speaking the One Catalog survey results indicate support for this initiative. Eighty four of the 96 directors answered yes to the question *Would you be willing to allow non-local patrons to request materials from [their] library through patron initiated borrowing through a statewide catalog?* Thirty of these appended with caveats that included questions of policy, cost, practice, etc. This equates to 87% of responders willing, in principle, to allow non-local patrons to request materials from their library. The 12 libraries that answered no were mostly school libraries, plus one public and one special library. The responses to the follow up question *Would you be willing to take part in the statewide linked catalog initiative?* demonstrated even greater support. Eighty-seven of the directors indicated yes, they would be willing to take part in this initiative, and 26 of these with caveats, again with concerns expressed about cost, practicality and policies. In short, 90% of those who responded would be willing to take part in a statewide linked catalog initiative. Only 9 libraries answered no to the question.

Despite the overall support for this initiative, responses to the open ended questions must be considered, including the final question: *Do you have questions and/or concerns regarding the implementation of a statewide catalog in Rhode Island?* Of the 96 responses 40 directors entered comments. Some responses were simple statements of support; however, there were many requests for more information, or indications of more cautious support, e.g. "We would need a lot details, including pricing, but also practical matters..." or, "I have little information about this initiative and need more to make an informed decision."

The survey results indicate that of those directors that responded there is support for a catalog that would "create a bridge between the two main library catalogs in Rhode Island: HELIN and Ocean State Libraries." However, it is also clear that before most library directors would invest staff time or financial resources to this initiative, more information is needed, including price, but also practical details about how such a system and service would work. The best method of documenting and communicating new information will be a crucial next decision.

Data Analysis

Below find a brief outline of some of the specific responses to the survey.

Respondents represented by library type:

There were 96 responses, out of 177 sent. Of these the following library types were represented:

- 11* -- (11%) Academic Libraries – * Eleven represents 92% of all Academic Libraries
- 28* -- (29%) Public Libraries – * Twenty-eight represents 60% of all Public Libraries
- 46* -- (48%) School Libraries – *Forty-six represents 45% of all School Libraries
- 11* -- (11%) Special libraries, including six hospital libraries – * Eleven represents 58% of all Special Libraries including 6 hospital libraries.

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Questions and Responses

1. *What is the size of your circulating collection?*

- a. Sixteen libraries reported having a circulating collection greater than 100,000. Nine of the 16 libraries were public libraries, one was a special library and six were academic libraries. Four libraries reported having a circulating collection greater than 500,000, of those, one was a public library and the rest were academic libraries.
- b. Thirty-nine of the respondents reported having a circulating collection of 10,000 or fewer items, these were school libraries and special libraries.

2. *What is the primary way your patrons search for materials in your collection?*

More than half of the respondents indicated that the primary way their patrons search for materials in the collection was through a catalog of a network/consortium (e.g., HELIN or Ocean State Libraries); however, forty libraries indicated it was through a catalog of local collections.

3. *Would you be willing to allow non-local patrons to request materials from your library through patron initiated borrowing, i.e. a statewide catalog?*

- a. Fifty-four of responding libraries indicated an unequivocal yes, they would be willing to allow non-local patrons to request materials from their library. There were two comments: one indicating the requirement that it would be possible to “pass on a request”, and the other that such a system would have to be simple “through a system like [Inn-Reach] . . . with items going to patrons’ home library.”
- b. Twelve libraries indicated no, with two expressing concerns that they have no funds to replace items lost through this initiative.
- c. Thirty libraries indicated yes, but with a variety of caveats. In general the caveats were questions about: (1) whether the demand would make this impractical, especially for smaller libraries, and (2) whether the system would recognize local policies, e.g. patron types, non-circulating items, formats, et al. One commented that participation would have to be voluntary “not mandatory”. Another recommended “testing the concept before going statewide”.

4. *Would you be willing to take part in the statewide linked catalog initiative?*

- a. Sixty one of the responding libraries indicated yes, that they would be willing to take part in this initiative.
- b. Nine libraries indicated no.
- c. Twenty-five libraries responded yes, but with caveats. The caveats in this case followed two general themes: (1) practical matters as expressed in III above, and (2) a requirement that more information is needed about the system, the potential cost, and if it would be possible to do a pilot to judge demand.

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5. *Comments*

The survey provided an open text box as the final question. Of the ninety-six responses, forty included comments, falling under the categories below:

More information:

The comments were mostly expressions for more information and a requirement for more information before any definitive decision could be made. Specific information requests ranged from how much a system would cost, what its functionality would be (e.g. how would it verify patrons' credentials; how it would search local catalogs, etc.); who would maintain the hardware and software; how would this impact the cost of delivery; and, how would policies be developed and enforced?

Relevance:

There was some question about demand for this service. One person wrote "Is this the best way to improve library service in Rhode Island? Does the public want/need this service?" The implication here is that it might be worth measuring interest by patrons before proceeding. Another person questioned whether OPACs were how patrons look for material anymore, especially into the future. In a somewhat related way another person raised the question of how e-books would play into this and the complexity of vendor agreements.

Sustainability:

As was raised in other questions, there was some concern expressed that such a service would become so popular as to be impractical to sustain, both locally, e.g. "I do not have the staff to support such an initiative", but also globally, "OSL faces many initiatives funds are limited," and whether there is an office who can take on "the responsibility for the maintenance of the statewide catalog."

Misunderstanding the initiative itself:

A few comments suggested that the respondent did not understand the scope of the project, for example, one person wrote: "What exactly [c]ould both library users, and library institutions be able to do today, that they can't do because we don't have a unified catalog?"

Support:

Nine comments expressed essentially unequivocal support, with statements like, "this is a service that should have been offered years ago. I hope this comes to fruition."

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Appendix B

Request for Information sent to the three vendors

- **The Letter sent from the One Catalog Committee to the three vendors**

The Library of Rhode Island (LORI) One Catalog Working Group is investigating potential vendor systems that could serve as a platform for a LORI-wide catalog of Rhode Island Libraries.

LORI consists of the following:

- Ocean State Libraries (OSL) - 70 public libraries, 1 school and 1 special libraries
- Higher Education Library Network (HELIN) - 29 academic and hospital libraries in two independent catalogs
- Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK) - 99 school libraries
- 12 independent libraries - look under 'Online Catalogs of Individual Institutions' at <http://www.olis.ri.gov/libraries/index.php>.

Both the HELIN and OSL consortia use the Innovative Interface integrated library system. RILINK uses Follette Destiny. The combined holdings of these libraries is approximately over eight million volumes.

We would like to identify product(s) that will enable the libraries listed above to

1. locate materials by conducting a single online search of all these catalogs
2. identify libraries holding the desired item(s)
3. place an unmediated request for a particular item to a holding library

Please provide a brief written response to the following questions by January 31, 2014.

1. Do you offer a product that allows a user to simultaneously search multiple library catalogs, or that creates a union catalog? Briefly describe this capability and the technology and/or standards used.
2. Does your product return a merged list of results with real-time holdings and availability status? Briefly describe the capability and the technology and/or standards used.
3. Does your product allow patron-initiated requesting without mediation by the borrowing library? Briefly describe this capability and the technology and/or standards used.
4. Does your product interact with each local library's native system to authorize patrons? Briefly describe this capability and the technology and/or standards used.
5. Does your product interact with each local native system to create and maintain circulation transactions? Briefly describe this capability and the technology and/or standards used.
6. Does your product allow for cross-platform functionality with the systems of other vendors? If so, please list the vendor systems with which cross-platform functionality already exists and any vendor systems with which cross-platform functionality is being actively developed.
7. Please list regional or state-wide consortia that are currently using your system. Include the types of libraries represented (academic, public, school, special) and the library system vendors that are connected.

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8. When applicable, briefly describe a typical hardware installation, and central staffing requirements.
9. Finally, please provide estimations of
 - 1) the inclusive expenses required for the first year;
 - 2) the annual expenses for each of the following 4 years:
 - for a solution involving the installation of a discovery and delivery mechanism for OSL and HELIN catalogs with 212 libraries as pick up locations.
 - for a solution involving the inclusion of those 111 non-OSL and non-HELIN libraries in the scenario listed above.